



# STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL

NEBRASKA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
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October 15, 2002  
10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

## ***MINUTES***

Present: Berger, Christensen, Davis, Fox, Gieschen, Grone, Ham, Jelinek, Kolb, Littlebeaver, Lloyd, Rasmussen, Shepard, Vavrina

Absent: Bloechle, Curry, Nolan Brown, Schultz, Sorensen

I. *Public Comment* – There was no public comment.

II. *Introduction of New Members* -

Regina Littlebeaver was introduced as the new representative of the State Workforce Investment Board.

Kathy Hoell attended in place of Tim Kolb as a representative of the Statewide Independent Living Council. A motion was made by Fox and seconded by Vavrina that rule IV.A.7 of the operational procedures, which requires members unable to attend council meetings to designate a substitute in writing, be suspended for the meeting so Kathy could participate. Motion passed.

Rod Breckner has submitted his resignation from the council.

III. *Approval of Agenda*

- Mel Bargas was unable to attend, so New Business VIII.B was deleted.
- VIII.C Council Survey was moved to before the committee meetings, so the committee could have the council's input on the survey input before they meet.

A motion to approve the agenda as amended was made by Littlebeaver and seconded by Davis. Motion passed.

IV. *Approval of Minutes from August 20, 2002*

Jelinek noted that he is no longer the chair of the Client Services/Satisfaction Committee - Ham is the new chair. Shepard clarified that the intent of the survey being done by the

Interagency Committee is not just to identify the referral sources for VR but to determine the strengths and weaknesses of the relationships between VR and their referral sources.

A motion to approve the minutes as corrected was made by Fox and seconded by Rasmussen. Motion passed.

V. Director's Report (*Frank Lloyd*)

1. **Employment 2003 Update** – Employment 2003 is a sub-committee of the State Mental Health Planning and Evaluation Council. Their intent is to bring employment to the attention of the state for people who experience mental illness. The committee recommended setting up employment forums around the state to gather input. The first forum was held in Kearney with representatives from HHS, Education, VR, and consumers attending. There was a panel discussion in the morning where the agency people talked about their services as they relate to employment for people who experience a mental illness. In the afternoon, people viewed videotaped scenarios of people with mental illness looking for work. Attendees then broke into groups to discuss the scenarios and come up with recommendations for the individual looking for work and how agencies could collaborate. The forums will provide the committee with suggestions about how existing systems could cooperate and expand services for people with mental illness looking for employment. The initial evaluations from the forum were positive and the committee will consider doing others across the state.
2. **Individual Plan for Employment (IPE) Process** –At the last SRC meeting, Dennis King presented information about the IPE process to the council. This process begins at the time a client contacts VR and continues through the development and approval of the IPE. The new process has been piloted in Norfolk during the past several months, and will be implemented in Omaha beginning November 1.
3. **Budget Modifications** – The Department of Education was recently asked to submit to the state a proposed budget with cuts supporting a 13.6% reduction in funds. Cuts in this amount in VR will save the state approximately \$525,000.00 in state funds, but amount to a \$2.5 million loss in federal funds. The federal funds lost are much greater because for every \$1 in state funds lost, VR loses the matching \$3.69 in federal funds. The total loss in 2003 would be approximately \$3 million. No cuts have been finalized yet, but many are expected when the legislature goes back into session.
4. **Transition Improvements** – VR distributed the 1st edition of the new transition publication Making It Work last month. The focus of the publication is to get information to parents who have students with special needs early in the transition years. The publication will contain information about all different resources regarding transition, and emphasize the collaboration between agencies, businesses, and schools in meeting transition needs. Anyone wanting to receive the publication can subscribe by mail or via the Voc Rehab website ([www.vocrehab.state.ne.us](http://www.vocrehab.state.ne.us)).  
☐ **Transition planner** – VR is also developing a Transition Planner which will standardize the information shared with schools about VR and their role in the schools. The planner is approximately 12 pages and will be a guide for educators regarding things such as eligibility, how to make referrals, who VR can work with, etc. Copies will be made available to council members when it is finished. VR is asking staff members to develop a written planning form with each school which will identify how VR will operate with the school regarding transition planning.

The planning form will be completed for any school where there are more than 20 special education students in the high school.

5. **Service Specialist Position** – As discussed at previous meetings, NDE began a classification study intended to reduce the number of classifications in the Department of Education. In the process, the consultants recommended that VR develop a middle position between the Rehab Associate (clerical) and the Rehab Specialist (provision of services). This middle position, Service Specialist, will require a bachelors degree, while the Rehab Specialist will continue to require a masters degree. A handout identifying duties for each of the three positions was distributed (*Field Office Work Activities handout*). To date, 17 service specialists have been hired across the state
6. **New Staff Training** – The core training program provided for each new VR staff person is available on the web site.
7. **State Staff** – Training for all VR staff is scheduled for Oct 28-30 in Kearney. The training is funded through a federal training grant that can only be used for staff development activities. Most of the training will be centered around Ticket to Work and social security issues.

VI. Old Business

- A. Annual Report (Sue Gieschen)

Committee reports for the annual report or due to Cathy by October 31, 2002.

- B. Council Survey – reported below during committee reports.

VII. Reports

- A. Committee Reports

*Interagency/Annual Report Committee* – Shepard reported that the committee discussed 3 things: 1) Referral source survey - the committee is proceeding with the referral source survey that was presented to the council at the last meeting. Shepard will meet with Don and Cathy to identify the referral sources and develop a cover letter to be sent out with the survey. The survey will identify the needs of the current referral sources and find out the nature of their relationship with VR. As surveys are returned, the information will be compiled and presented back to the council. 2) Employment outcomes - the committee has been looking at employment outcomes by referral source (*see attached handout Referral Source Outcome chart*) and how many from each referral source were successfully employed. The committee is going to have a conference call after they review the information and bring recommendations back to the council at the next meeting; 3) Annual Report – the committee had no suggestions for changes to the report to be done for FY2002. The council suggested adding descriptors to the chart.

*Strategic Issues* – The committee discussed ways specialized benefits analysis are being provided to consumers in Ticket to Work, and identifying more effective ways to get information out to parents about transition services and finding better ways to collaborate with the schools.

*Client Services/Satisfaction*- Ham reported that the committee reviewed the information shared earlier at the meeting. A motion was made by Ham, on behalf of the committee, that as a result of the client survey 1) VR ask area administrators to address with each of their offices the importance of customer service as it relates to

returning phone calls, updating their voice mail, and enlisting staff in returning phone calls; 2) the council formally support the customer service initiative currently being implemented by VR and recommend updates on the progress of the initiative be provided to the council by VR. Vavrina seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

B. CAP Report (*Vicki Rasmussen*)

The CAP report was distributed to the council prior to the meeting with the meeting materials. There were no questions regarding the report.

Rasmussen indicated that she is working on the end of the year CAP report. A copy will be provided to the Executive Committee when it is finished.

C. SILC Report (*Tim Kolb*)

Hoell indicated concern regarding notification of the meeting. Those not in attendance at the previous meeting were not aware of the 2002-2003 meetings that were scheduled. A schedule of meetings for the year has been distributed to all council members.

The SILC has received notice of their 501(c)3 status and elected new officers. Plans for various granting opportunities are now being considered. The council is forming a statewide advocacy team of persons with disabilities from across the state that would be willing to be involved in advocacy efforts. If the SRC has ideas of how to get people involved in this, let the SILC know.

The SILC intends to sponsor a disability conference in April/May of 2005 for people with disabilities. People from various agencies will be invited to present information about what their agencies have to offer. The conference will be an opportunity for people with disabilities to get together to focus on advocacy efforts and training.

D. ATP Report (*Mark Schultz*)

Mark was unable to attend the meeting so no report was given.

VIII. New Business

A. State Plan and Policy Issues (*Don Crouch*)

Crouch reminded the council that VR is interested in any feedback the council members hear from their communities. One role of council members is to bring information back to VR and help them identify ways of being more effective.

B. VR Committee Reports

Staff Retention Committee (*Mel Bargas*)

Mel was unable to attend the meeting.

C. Satisfaction Survey (*Sue Gieschen*)

Council Reaction - Rasmussen reported that the committee felt the responses to the survey were mostly positive, but were disappointed that the return rate was only about 15%.

VR Office Reaction - Crouch reported that individual remarks made about staff members were passed along to supervisor to address with their staff. The other information gathered from the survey was passed along to area administrators and VR asked that they share the information with their staff. The feedback received from offices was given to Don and shared with the council. Overall, VR staff have been fairly pleased with the results of the survey.

A few of the offices had several respondents who indicated 1) VR didn't meet the clients needs; 2) VR didn't do what they said they would do; and 3) VR didn't respond to phone calls. Don contacted those office to find out what changes they are making as a result of these comments. First, the responses are being shared with staff to let them know how we are being perceived. Second, an emphasis is being made on the importance of the timely return of phone calls. Two offices have decided to set standards for returning phone calls. Third, the new IEP process will help ensure VR is meeting the needs of the client.

The next steps will be to give the information to area supervisors to review and discuss in the office to see if they need to makes changes based on the information. The committee will review what supervisors respond to and make a recommendation to VR. A final report summarizing the information and identifying what was done in response to the information will be done by the committee.

D. Transition Services Age 18-21 (Jack Shepard)

During the past year, a bill was introduced into the legislature designed to eliminate the gap in services between high school services and adult services for 18-21 year old kids. Senator Byers questioned whether the legislation was necessary, and asked for an attorney general opinion on whether special education services can be provided for children until age 21. The attorney general opinion indicated that special education services can be provided by schools until students graduate (receive a diploma) or turn 21. HHSS has interpreted the statute as having to have a diploma AND be age 21. The attorney general ruling indicates its either or. Nebraska Advocacy is currently working with some individuals to help them through the system. The Commissioner of Education is continuing to have discussions with Ron Ross, Director of HHS. Legal departments have gotten involved in trying to gather all information necessary to determine how to proceed.

The State Developmental Disabilities Council has awarded a small grant to Special Education that will be used to ask parents, VR, educators, DD, and others to develop indicators for readiness for graduation, so the IEP team can determine if a person who has these skills and has been provided these services should be moved into the adult system. The reality is that schools are not going to graduate every kid at 18 – some need to stay until age 21. The indicators will help determine when the students are ready to move on. This decision to move needs to be based on both indicators and students readiness.

E. Ticket to Work (*Don Crouch*)

(*Handout BPAO Projects*)

A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Hultine and seconded by Shepard. Motion passed. Meeting adjourned at 2:10 p.m.

The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, December 17, 2002.